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ABSTRACT

Job satisfaction is highly researched in industrial and organizational psychology, and the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) is often used to measure job satisfaction. The JDI has been shown to have significant convergent and discriminant validities, good internal consistency and stability, and has been related to various personal and job factors. While most studies using the JDI have used an English version, the literature suggests that a reasonable translation of the JDI is possible. Little attention has been given, however, to the study of the relationship between job satisfaction and background and job-related variables in different cultures. This study investigated the feasibility of using a translated version of the JDI to measure job satisfaction for Korean workers and examined how job satisfaction is related to other worker measures. Korean workers (N=417) completed a Korean version of the revised JDI and responded to a questionnaire measuring 11 demographic and 2 job-related variables. The revised JDI scales appeared to generalize, in reliability and factor structure, to the Korean sample. Job satisfaction was found to be related to workers' statements concerning their intentions to stay on the job but was not related to self-rated performance. Significant correlations were found between job satisfaction and a variety of background variables and these were consistent with findings for American workers. (NB)

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The Measurement of Job Satisfaction in Korea

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Running head: Job Satisfaction in Korea

This paper was prepared for the Ninety-sixth Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association.

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Abstract

This study investigated job satisfaction and its correlates for a sample of 417 Korean workers. A Korean version of the revised JDI (R-JDI), eleven demographic and 2 job variables were developed and put into a questionnaire form. The results suggested that the R-JDI scales appeared to generalize, in reliability and factor structure, to the Korean sample. Also, job satisfaction was related to workers' statements concerning their intentions to stay on the job but not related to performance (self-rated). Significant correlations were found between job satisfaction and a variety of background variables and these were consistent with findings for American workers.

Job Satisfaction in Korea: Equivalence of a Translation

Job satisfaction is one of the most highly researched areas in industrial and organizational psychology (Jaffaldano & Muchinsky, 1985; Locke, 1976). The Job Descriptive Index, JDI, (Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969) has been the most frequently used measure of job satisfaction and subjected to extensive validation attempts (Robinson, Athanasiou, & Head, 1969; Vroom, 1964). The JDI has been found to have significant convergent and discriminant validities, good internal consistency and stability (Smith et al., 1969), and been found to be related to a variety of personal and job factors (Jaffaldano & Muchinsky, 1985).

Most studies using the JDI have dealt with an English version. The generalization of the JDI to other countries has only recently received circumscribed support in the literature. The limited efforts that have been made to use a non-English version of the JDI have focused upon the psychometric qualities of the JDI and have provided little support for how a job satisfaction construct would operate in work situations in other countries and cultures.

The majority of the translation studies have been almost solely concerned with the ability to develop a translated version of the JDI that can be applied to individuals speaking a language in addition to, or other than, English. For example, in a study by Katerberg, Smith, and Hoy (1977), bilingual employees of a large retail merchandising company in America were administered both an English and a Spanish version of the JDI. The English and Spanish forms were collected at two different times 6 weeks apart. The correlations between the English and Spanish forms at two different times were quite high (.85 to .92).

In a similar fashion, McCabe, Dalessio, Briga, and Sasaki (1980), using the Katerberg et al. (1977) data and a multitrait-multimethod approach, investigated the quality of the translation. Good convergent and discriminant validities were reported, again indicating the success of the translation. The Katerberg et al. (1977) data were also reanalyzed by Hulin, Drasgow, and Komocar (1982), using an Item Response Theory (IRT) approach. Employing this method, only three out of the 72 items were found to be biased.

Although these studies have provided consistent evidence of the quality of translated versions of the JDI, one basic problem still exists in generalizing the results. These approaches require the use of bilingual people as a sample rather than monolingual people and further require them to complete both versions (English and non-English) of the instrument.

A study by Hulin and Mayer (1986) used monolingual people to test the quality of a Hebrew version of the JDI. Data were collected from two samples, American and Israeli workers, respectively. The results showed that a large number of items acted differently for the two samples. Hulin and Mayer argued that the item differences were more attributable to cultural differences than problems with the translation process.

Overall, the limited literature suggests that it is possible to obtain a reasonable translation of the JDI. However, little attention has been given to the study of the relationship between job satisfaction and background and job related variables in different cultures. The purpose of this study was to investigate the feasibility of using a translated version of the JDI to measure job satisfaction for Korean workers and, in addition, how job satisfaction is related to other worker measures. Korea is a rapidly developing industrial

nation and there has been little, if any, study of its workers and their job satisfaction. In this study, the psychometric qualities of the Korean version was compared to those of the original version. Further, the nature of relationships between background factors, job variables, and the JDI was compared to those found in U. S. Samples.

Method

Subjects

Data were collected from 515 Korean employees of a medium size pharmaceutical chemical manufacturing company that had approximately 600 total employees and was located in a metropolitan district of Seoul, Korea. Responses were discarded from 44 respondents due to incomplete information, leaving a total of 471 respondents. Demographically, the overall sample was: 68 % male; 54 % married; and 63 % white collar workers; and had an average age of 30 years.

Instruments and Procedures

The Revised Job Descriptive Index, R-JDI, (Smith, 1987) was used in the study. The R-JDI measures five different aspects of job satisfaction: (1) work itself; (2) pay; (3) promotion; (4) supervision; and (5) co-workers. Each scale consists of a list of adjectives (e.g. stimulating, routine, and etc) describing various aspects of the component dimensions. An individual responds by checking a "yes" if the item describes his or her job, "no" if the item does not describe his or her job, and "?" if he or she can not decide. In this study, "yes" and "no" were replaced by "O" and "X" for translation convenience, respectively. The R-JDI consists of a total of 72 items: (1) work itself = 18; (2) pay = 9; (3) promotion = 9; (4) supervision = 18; and

(5) co-workers = 18.

The R-JDI was first translated into Korean by two Korean students, and then translated by a fluent bilingual person (different from the original translators) back to English. There was a satisfactory level of agreement between the original English version and the English version translated from the Korean version. Minor differences were detected (2 items) and adjustments were made to the Korean version[1]. For this study, 11 demographic variables were developed and put into a questionnaire form along with the Korean version of the R-JDI. The demographic variables are as follows; sex, age, marital status, job tenure, educational level, working hours, occupational level, previous work experience, years of service in other jobs, number of previous job turnovers, and socio-economic level. Two additional job related questions (self-rating of job performance and intention to leave) were asked.

The Korean employees were asked to assemble in an auditorium of the company (on several occasions) and a staff member explained the purpose of the study and asked them to complete the survey.

Analysis

The original analysis called for a principal component analysis rotating five factors. Coefficients of congruence (Harman, 1967) were computed between the Korean sample and a comparable American sample (Jung, Dalessio, & Johnson, 1986). Internal consistency reliabilities and scale score intercorrelations were also performed for the R-JDI scales and Pearson product moment correlations were computed between the R-JDI scale scores and the questionnaire items.

Results

For a five factor solution, the factors found were; positively worded Co-workers items, negatively worded Co-workers items, Work Itself, Supervision, and a combined Pay and Promotion scale. Given that the original JDI structure was not completely replicated, both a four factor and a six factor solution were computed.

For the four factor solution, the Work Itself, Supervision, and Co-workers scales appeared to remain relatively intact whereas the Pay and Promotion scales combined into one factor. In the six factor solution, the Pay and Promotion scales separated into two factors, and the Co-workers scale continued to split into two factors. The Work Itself and Supervision scales remained intact.

The coefficients of congruence were calculated between the five factors of the original JDI and the four, five, and six factor solutions of the Korean version of the R-JDI. As Table 1 indicates, the Work Itself scale was very highly congruent across the various solutions (.93, .92, and .93 for the four, five, and six factor solution, respectively). The Supervision scale was also highly congruent across the solutions (.81, .89, and .89).

Insert Table 1 about here

Both the Pay and Promotion factors were highly stable in the six factor solution (.82 for both factors). Congruence for the Co-workers factor was found to be moderate in the four factor solution (.71). When the Co-workers factor split into the two factors in the five and six factor solution, each of

the two Co-workers factors had moderate coefficients with the original Co-workers dimension of the JDI (.72 and .77 for the five factor solution, and .73 and .79 for the six factor solution). Given the intent to compare the finding with results from the English version and that there was a reasonable fit with a five factor solution, it was decided to retain five factors for the remainder of the study.

An item analysis was conducted for each of the five scales, with several items appearing to be problems in the Korean sample. Overall, eight items (out of 72 items) had low item-total correlations ($r < .3$). To retain comparability with U. S. studies, all eight items were retained.

Table 2 shows the reliability estimates and the scale intercorrelations for the five dimensions of the Korean version of the R-JDI. The coefficient alpha estimates of internal consistency reliability were moderate to high, ranging from .69 to .90. The scale intercorrelations indicated that the five dimensions had moderate to low correlations with each other (.10 to .50). These values were similar to those for the original JDI (Smith et al. 1969).

Insert Table 2 about here

The intercorrelations among the background and job variables are presented in Table 3. One background variable, job turnover, appeared to be relatively independent of the other background variables; it was significantly correlated with only two variables, age ($r = .17$, $p < .05$) and years of service in other jobs ($r = .33$, $p < .01$). However, the other background variables generally had significant intercorrelations; sex and marital status were significantly

intercorrelated with nine out of ten variables (the lone exception was job turnover).

Insert Table 3 about here

Intentions to leave was significantly correlated with seven of the background variables. Employees who were female, single, younger, had less tenure, more education, were blue collar, and had fewer years of service in other jobs had a greater intention to leave the company. The self-rating of job performance was significantly correlated with only one of the background variables, sex.

Table 4 shows the correlations between the background and job variables and the R-JDI scales. Many of these variables were moderately correlated with the R-JDI scales. With the exception of three variables (working hours, previous work experience, and self-rating of job performance), other variables were significantly correlated with one or more of the five dimensions of the R-JDI. Intentions to leave had significant positive correlations with all five of the R-JDI dimensions. Employees who reported a lower likelihood of leaving were more satisfied on all five dimensions of the R-JDI.

Insert Table 4 about here

Sex was negatively correlated with four dimensions of the R-JDI (pay was an exception). Male employees reported higher levels of satisfaction. Four positive correlations were found between educational level and the R-JDI scales

(work itself, promotion, pay, and co workers), suggesting that the higher the employees' education, the greater the employees' satisfaction. Married employees reported significantly higher levels of satisfaction with the work itself and their supervision. Older employees had higher levels of satisfaction with work itself, promotion, and supervision. Also, employees who belong to a higher socioeconomic level were more satisfied with promotion and pay.

In order to investigate the effects of occupational level on the correlations, the total sample was split into two groups, blue and white collar workers. Major differences in the correlations were found for the two samples. In the blue collar sample, educational level was not significantly correlated with any of the five dimensions of the R-JDI whereas educational level was significantly correlated with all five dimensions of the R-JDI in the white collar sample.

Discussion

The present study shows that, although there are some limitations, the R-JDI scales appear to be measuring a similar set of constructs in the Korean sample as has been found in the United States. Each of the five dimensions of the R-JDI emerged at least once as a single factor over the four, five, and six factor solutions for the Korean version of the R-JDI. Reliabilities and scale intercorrelations were similar to those found in the English version. As with previous studies (e.g. Hulin & Mayer, 1986) the question must be asked as to the origin of the differences that were found; translation procedures or cultural differences between the United States and Korea. Cultural differences would appear to be a potential factor in producing these results. The pay and

promotion factors have been stable over a number of studies conducted on the factor structure of the JDI in the U. S. (Smith, Smith, & Rollo, 1974; Jung, Dalessio, & Johnson, 1986; Yeager, 1981). Except in the six factor solution, the Pay and Promotion scales emerged in this study as a combined Pay/Promotion factor. A plausible explanation for this combining of pay and promotion factors may be the strong relationship between pay and promotion in Korea. In most Korean organizations, few pay differences are found between employees at the same job level. Thus, for many Korean employees, satisfaction with promotion and salary are closely linked. A second, and potentially a more plausible explanation for the pay/promotion problem, is that the splitting of the Co-workers scale forces the Pay and Promotion scales to combine. While the splitting of the Co-worker scale into two factors in two of the factor solutions may reflect cultural differences in Korea, these findings are similar to those found by Yeager (1981).

The pattern of intercorrelations between and among the background and job variables and the R-JDI scales was similar to those found in other research with job satisfaction. Past studies in the U. S. of the correlations between intention to leave and the background variables indicated that individuals who are younger, have less tenure, and have more education are more likely to leave the company (Parasuraman & Futrell, 1983). With the exception of education, this was also the case for the Korean sample.

A consistent relationship was found between the R-JDI scales and intention to leave in the Korean sample. Employees with a stated intention of not leaving the company were significantly more satisfied on all five R-JDI scales. Similarly, strong relationships have been found between the intention to leave

variable and job satisfaction in American samples (Bluedorn, 1982; Parasuraman & Futrell, 1983; Price & Mueller, 1981; Thompson & Terpening, 1983). Generally, low correlation between job satisfaction and job performance has been consistently reported in the U. S. (Iaffaldano & Muchinsky, 1985; Vroom, 1964) and the Korean sample replicated these results.

For the Korean employees, job satisfaction increased as age increased. Similar findings have been reported for American employees (Gibson & Klein, 1970; Hulin & Smith, 1965; Lee & Wilbur, 1985). There were also two significant positive correlations between job tenure and the R-JDI scales in this study and these results are consistent with Hulin and Smith (1965). While Korean male employees were significantly more satisfied with four of the five R-JDI dimensions (pay was the lone exception), there have been inconsistent findings on the relationships between sex and job satisfaction for American workers (Iaffaldano & Muchinsky, 1985).

Earlier, Herzberg, Mausner, Peterson, and Capwell (1957) reported that the higher the occupational level, the higher the morale found in a work group. Hulin and Smith (1965) and Mottaz (1986) also found a positive relationship between job satisfaction and occupational level. In this study, similar results appeared for the R-JDI work itself scale; the white collar sample was more satisfied. The true relationship between education and job satisfaction has been the source of controversy in the U. S. literature. One view is that educational level tends to increase job satisfaction by increasing both the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards of work (Glenn & Weaver, 1982; Quinn & Mandilovitch, 1975). However, an alternate view suggests that education may decrease satisfaction with work by increasing job expectations and aspirations

that may not be completely fulfilled in the work situation (Klein & Maher, 1966; Mottaz, 1984; Vollmer & Kinney, 1955). The results in this study were consistent with the first point of view. Employees at higher levels of education were significantly more satisfied on four dimensions of the R-JDI (the exception was satisfaction with supervision).

There is a complicating factor in the above issue. When correlations between the background variables and the R-JDI scales were reanalyzed in terms of the two different levels of occupation, there were no significant correlations between educational level and the five dimensions of the R-JDI in the blue collar sample. These results were consistent with Wright and Hamilton's (1975) findings that education was unrelated to job satisfaction among blue-collar workers. In the white collar Korean sample, however, education had significant positive correlations with all of five dimensions of the R-JDI. These results appear to reflect one aspect of a traditional Korean value. In Korea, promotion for white collar workers is highly dependent upon an employees' education thus, higher education leads to greater satisfaction with their jobs.

Several limitations should be noted in this study. First, since the R-JDI form was used in this study, the items were not exactly the same as those used in the original JDI. There were seven items which differed between the two JDI forms. Another limitation was that since the sample was taken from one Korean company in this study, the generalizability of the results may be limited. Future study should be conducted with samples from a variety of Korean organizations to ensure the factor structure of the Korean version of the R-JDI. Also, as Hulin and Mayer (1986) pointed out, even excellent

backward translations do not automatically result in the equivalence of two language versions, more attention should be given to a careful analysis of the items prior to the comparison of the factor structure between the original JDI and the Korean version of the R-JDI.

The present study has shown that the R-JDI scales appeared to be generalizable to the Korean sample. As often reported in the U. S., job satisfaction was found to be related to worker's statements concerning their intentions to stay on a job but not related to performance on the job (self rated). Significant correlations were found between job satisfaction and a variety of background variables and these were consistent with findings for American workers. While cultural differences between Korea and the United States are more likely to be a plausible explanation for some of the differences found in the factor structure, the overall similarities were greater than the differences. In conclusion, this study provides empirical evidence for the generalizability of the R-JDI to the Korean culture.

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Author Notes

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Footnotes

[1]Information concerning the Korean version of the R-JDI can be obtained from Ronald G. Downey, Department of Psychology, Bluemont Hall, Manhattan, KS 66506.

Table 1

Coefficients of Congruence Between the Korean and English Versions of the R-JDI

(English Version Across the Top and Korean Version on the Side)

Four Factor Solution

	Supervision	Co-workers	Work	Promotion	Pay
Work	0.43	0.27	0.92	0.39	0.21
Supervision	0.81	0.72	0.38	0.06	0.20
Pay/Promotion	0.15	0.10	0.20	0.57	0.79
Co-workers	0.33	0.71	0.30	0.41	- 0.04

Five Factor Solution

	Supervision	Co-workers	Work	Promotion	Pay
Work	0.39	0.31	0.93	0.36	0.23
Supervision	0.89	0.45	0.39	0.14	0.14
Co-workers(-)	0.48	0.77	0.24	- 0.24	0.17
Pay/Promotion	0.17	0.10	0.20	0.56	0.79
Co-workers(+)	0.31	0.72	0.31	0.42	- 0.04

Six Factor Solution

	Supervision	Co-workers	Work	Promotion	Pay
Work	0.39	0.31	0.93	0.31	0.23
Supervision	0.89	0.44	0.38	0.15	0.14
Co-workers(-)	0.50	0.79	0.28	- 0.09	0.18
Pay	0.15	0.10	0.16	0.37	0.82
Co-workers(+)	0.29	0.73	0.29	0.29	- 0.05
Promotion	0.11	0.04	0.26	0.82	0.22

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations
Among the Korean Version of the R-JDI Scales

	Mean	S.D	1	2	3	4	5
1. Work itself	22.84	13.73	(.90)				
2. Promotion	6.68	4.96	.33**	(.69)			
3. Pay	7.02	6.15	.25**	.36**	(.77)		
4. Supervision	34.50	11.30	.42**	.19**	.14**	(.85)	
5. Co-workers	37.53	10.69	.28**	.11*	.10*	.50**	(.84)

Note. Values in parentheses are coefficient alpha reliability estimates. Sample sizes range from 433 to 455 due to missing data.

* $P < .05$

** $P < .001$

Table 3

Means, Standard Deviation, and Intercorrelations Among Background Variables

	Mean	S.D	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Sex	1.32	0.47												
2. Marit Stus	1.46	0.50	64**											
3. Age	29.91	6.77	66**	-69**										
4. Tenure	5.07	4.2	-36**	-54**	74**									
5. Edu Level	3.27	0.77	-24**	-11*	10*	-15**								
6. Work Hrs	10.31	1.63	-34**	-12**	09	09	-06							
7. Occup Lel	1.37	0.48	-20**	-13**	19**	05	45**	-02						
8. Pre Work	1.56	0.50	09*	13**	-07	07	00	01	-10*					
9. Turnover	1.35	0.81	-07	-07	17*	-05	-11	06	-08	---				
10. Other Job	3.13	3.21	-27**	-27**	58**	09	13	01	13	---	33**			
11. Socio Lel	3.12	0.93	25**	25**	-21**	-16**	24**	-14**	15**	01	02	-08		
12. Perform	3.38	0.83	-12*	-06	01	-05	07	00	09	-05	07	-09	01	
13. Leave	3.05	1.25	-31**	-26**	30**	22**	13**	08	16**	-04	-02	17*	02	01

Note. Decimal points are omitted. Sex (1=male, 2=female); Marit Stus=Marital Status (1=married, 2=single); Edu Lel=Educational Level (1=elementary school, 6=graduate degree); Occup Lel=Occupational level (1=blue collar, 2=white collar); Pre Work=Previous Work Experience (1=yes, 2=no); Turnover=Number of Job Turnover; Other Job=Years of Service in Other Jobs; Socio Lel=Socio-economic Level (1=lower-lower class, 5=upper class); Perform=Self-rating of Job Performance (1=outstanding, 5=unsatisfactory); and Leave=Intentions to Leave (1=definitely leave, 5=definitely not leaving)

* $P < .05$

** $P < .01$

Table 4

Correlations Between Background Variables and the R-JDI Scales

	Sex Status	Marital ure	Age Lev	Ten Hrs	Edu Lev	Work Work	Ocp Over	Pre Job	Turn Level	Other form	Socio Leave	Per	Intent
Work	-45**	-39**	49**	29**	31**	02	38**	-06	01	30**	01	-04	43**
Promotion	10*	-09	15**	04	13**	09	06	08	-08	18**	13**	-01	19**
Pay	02	-01	07	01	14**	-03	06	-01	14**	24**	18**	03	20**
Supervision	-21**	-21**	24**	16**	09	-01	05	03	04	19*	-01	06	26**
Co-workers	-22**	-09	09	04	13**	01	03	02	-02	06	04	-02	22**

Note. Decimal points are omitted.

Note: Tenure = Job Tenure; Edu Lev = Educational Level; Work Hrs = Working Hours; Ocp Lev = Occupational Level; Pre Work = Previous Work Experience; Turnover = Number of Job Turnover; Other Job = Years of Service in Other Job; Socio Level = Socio-economic Level; Perform = Self-rating of Job Performance; Intent Leave = Intention to Leave.

See Table 3 for codes associated with each variable.

* $P < .05$
** $P < .01$